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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1703
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY 6022
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2302
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 1893
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 6732
RUEPGBA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ALGIERS 001118

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KISL](#) [AG](#)
SUBJECT: AUGUST STARTS OUT BADLY FOR AQIM

REF: ALGIERS 1094

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Thomas F. Daughton;
reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Local newspapers reported August 2 that two Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) figures, Ali Dix and Haroun Ashashi, were killed in an ambush by security forces in the mountains around Djurdjura (Tizi Ouzou province) east of Algiers. Indications are that the two were close to AQIM leader Droukdal, and were probably directly connected to the April and July suicide attacks in Algeria. We believe that with the elimination of the two, AQIM is now weaker than it was a month ago, at least temporarily. The reports came just days after the press revealed the surrender of AQIM Sahara region Moussaab Abou Daoud to the Algerian authorities in July. The combination appears likely to have dealt a blow to AQIM morale at a time when it was already hit by internal dissent and desertions. As of August 6, AQIM had not issued any new communiques concerning the press reports -- a sharp contrast to the flurry of communiques issued in the month of June. Other reports suggest, however, that AQIM is continuing to recruit at a healthy rate. End Summary.

12. (C) On August 2, the Arabic-language Algiers daily Echourouk el-Youmi headlined that two terrorist "emirs" were killed in an ambush in the province of Tizi Ouzou. The two were identified as Sid Ali Rachid (aka Ali Dix -- "Ali 10") and Nour Mohamad (aka Haroun Al-Ashashi). Press reports portrayed Ali Dix as AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdal's military advisor and right-hand man. He was reported to be the "executive supervisor" of the April 11 suicide attacks in Algiers that killed 32 and wounded more than 200 civilians. Ali Dix was also described as the "mastermind" behind the July 11 suicide attack on a military barracks in Lakhdaria that killed at least 10 soldiers and wounded more than 30.

13. (U) According to the Arabic-language daily El-Khabar on August 2, locals from Iboudrarene region of Tizi Ouzou provided information to the security services on the location of the two terrorists. After several days of investigation, Algerian forces were able to ambush them in the mountains of Djurdjura. Ashashi is said to have died immediately at the scene, while Ali Dix died several hours later from his wounds.

14. (C) Both El-Khabar and Echourouk el-Youmi reported on August 2 that Ali Dix had traveled to Algiers to conduct surveillance operations, pinpoint the targets, identify the suicide volunteers and purchase the vehicles for the April 11

attacks. Ali reportedly also wired the vehicles with remote detonators in case the suicide bombers had second thoughts about the mission. He watched as the bombs went off and videotaped the suicide operation that subsequently appeared on jihadi websites. (Note: This was the same tape that was broadcast on Al-Jazeera TV on April 11.)

Who Were Sid Ali Rachid and Nour Mohamad?

¶5. (C) According to Echourouk el-Youmi, Sid Ali Rachid was responsible for conducting terrorist activities in AQIM Zone 2 against military and security personnel (Zone 2 covers Algiers, Tizi Ouzou, Boumerdes, Bejaia and Bouira provinces). He had a diploma in mathematics and was an expert on explosives, a skill he learned and excelled in when he joined the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in 1994. He was born in 1974 and was a native of Lakhdaria, Bouira, site of the July 11 attack. It is also believed that Ali Dix played a major role in recruiting Algerian youth and laundering funds from kidnapping operations.

¶6. (U) According to the same Echourouk article on August 2, Nour Mohamed (aka Haroun Ashashi) was a close associate of Ali Dix. Ashashi's role as a logistics coordinator responsible for supplying AQIM with arms and ammunition from the Sahel region (Zone 9) made him a valuable asset to Droukdal. He was also a native of Bouira born in 1974.

Comment

¶7. (C) AQIM's last communique, posted on the internet on July

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23, threatened an increase in attacks against the enemies of God and warned Algerians to avoid gatherings at security offices and government buildings, including those of the infidels (reftel). As of August 6, we have seen no new communiques denying or confirming the deaths of Ali Dix and Haroun. So far, AQIM has not even sought to clarify what has happened. In contrast, when Algerian media reported April 27 that AQIM "deputy emir" Samir Saioud (aka Musab Abu Abdullah) had been killed on April 26 in a skirmish with security forces, the AQIM media committee quickly issued a clarification communique confirming Saioud's death, but denying that he was the deputy emir.

¶8. (C) Just days before the reported deaths of Ali Dix and Haroun Ashashi, Algerian media sources with strong ties to the security services gave broad coverage to the surrender of AQIM Sahara region "emir" Moussab Abou Daoud. Moussab, who apparently surrendered to the Algerian authorities in early July, provided extensive commentary to the press about internal dissent within AQIM. The combination of Moussab's surrender and the deaths of two of Droukdal's lieutenants seems likely to have dealt a blow to AQIM morale, and we suspect as a result that AQIM is now weaker than it was a month ago -- at least temporarily. At the same time, however, evidence suggests that AQIM is continuing to recruit at a healthy rate. One newspaper reported August 5, for example, that a terrorist killed near El-Oued in northeastern Algeria was in possession of a list of over 100 names of 16- to 20-year-old men who had recently been recruited in the area by AQIM.
DAUGHTON